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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1328
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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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DEPT FOR AF/S, NP/RA/CMARTIN AND WHAMMACK
ENERGY FOR NE-2.4, AND
NNSA/NA-243/MMANNING, NA-241, NA-21/ABIENIAWSKI

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ENRG](#) [KNNP](#) [OPDC](#) [TRGY](#) [SF](#)
SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA: ADVANCING BILATERAL COOPERATION ON
NUCLEAR ENERGY

REF: 05 STATE 92684

11. (SBU) Summary. On January 30, CDA Teitelbaum raised with Minister of Minerals and Energy Lindiwe Hendricks a number of bilateral cooperation items in the area of nuclear energy. Hendricks said that what remained on the Joint Standing Committee on Nuclear Energy Cooperation was for her to respond to Secretary Rice's letter of May 19, and then to constitute a delegation for an inaugural meeting. CDA Teitelbaum commented that given the July 2005 announcement to convert the Safari reactor to non-weapons grade fuel, South Africa would make a fitting host for the Reduced Enrichment for Research and Test Reactors Annual Meeting in the fall of 12006. Hendricks said that she looked forward to receiving an invitation to co-host the event from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). End Summary.

12. (SBU) CDA Teitelbaum raised with Minister of Minerals and Energy Lindiwe Hendricks a response to Secretary Rice's letter of May 2005, concerning the creation of a Joint Standing Committee on Nuclear Energy Cooperation and conclusion of research and development agreements on nuclear energy and nuclear materials safeguards technologies (reftel). CDA Teitelbaum also raised the return of U.S.-origin spent fuel assemblies and the prospect of South Africa hosting the Reduced Enrichment for Research and Test Reactors Annual Meeting in the fall of 2006.

13. (SBU) Hendricks, who was not well briefed for the meeting, told CDA Teitelbaum that after her August 2005 meeting with then Ambassador Frazer, she sought advice from former Minister of Minerals and Energy and now Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, who endorsed bilateral cooperation and advised her to continue preparations for a Joint Standing Committee. Hendricks said that what remained was for her to respond to Secretary Rice's letter, constitute a working level technical committee, designate a person to lead the South African delegation (most probably Deputy Director General Nelisiwe Magubane), and then hold the inaugural meeting.

14. (SBU) Hendricks was not sure where the research and development agreements stood. However, Chief Director Tseliso Maqubela later informed us that all stakeholders had

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agreed to the latest U.S. IPR language, and that the agreements were on the Minister's desk awaiting her approval.

¶5. (SBU) CDA Teitelbaum noted that while return of U.S.-origin spent fuel assemblies could not take place in 2006 for logistical reasons, both sides were moving forward in a step-by-step fashion to facilitate the exchange. The "take back program" was triggered by Minister Hendricks' July 2005 announcement that South Africa would convert its Safari research reactor from highly enriched uranium (HEU) fuel to low enriched uranium (LEU), i.e., non-weapons grade fuel.

¶6. (SBU) CDA Teitelbaum commented that given Minister Hendricks' July 2005 announcement, South Africa would make a fitting host for the Reduced Enrichment for Research and Test Reactors Annual Meeting in October or November of 2006. While Hendricks was not aware of the invitation, she agreed that it seemed to be a good event for South Africa to host. She looked forward to receiving an invitation from the IAEA, since planning for the event would have to get underway soon. Maqubela later told us that a letter from an IAEA Deputy Director General to Director General Sandile Nogxina would suffice, if arranging for a letter from IAEA Director General ElBaradei to Minister Hendricks would take too long.

¶7. (SBU) CDA Teitelbaum added that bilateral cooperation on nuclear energy would make a nice addition to the June 2006 review of the Joint Statement released by Presidents Bush and Mbeki in June 2005. Hendricks nodded in agreement.

¶8. (SBU) In closing, Hendricks thanked CDA Teitelbaum for raising these issues, adding, "We really do need to move." "These things could have fallen through the cracks," she continued, "in the transition from one minister to another." Hendricks promised to follow up on the RERTR Conference.
TEITELBAUM